

*Note on the Preceding Paper.* — By DR. A. F. RUDOLF HOERNLE.

There is one point in the preceding admirable survey of the coinage of the Gupta period, on which, as it concerns myself more nearly, I wish to add a remark. It is the name of the predecessor of Nara Simha Gupta on the Bhitari seal.

It has been read Pura Gupta by myself (*Journal*, A. S. B., for 1889, vol. lviii, p. 90) and by Dr. Fleet (*Indian Antiquary*, for 1890, vol. xix, p. 226), Sthira Gupta by Professor Bühler (Smith's *Observations*, p. 83, footnote 2, and *ante*, p. 166, footnote), and Puru Gupta by General Sir A. Cunningham (*Coins of Mediæval India*, pp. 10, 13).

As to Sthira Gupta, Professor Bühler, so far as I am aware, has nowhere published that reading *himself*. The footnote, *ante*, p. 166, will be apt to convey the impression, that Professor Bühler arrived at his reading after an examination of the *cast* which Dr. Führer says he sent him "at the time," (when?). This would not be correct. The reading was originally based on an examination of the *collotype* of the seal published by me in the *Journal* for 1889. Immediately after the receipt of a copy of my paper and the collotype, Professor Bühler wrote to me to suggest the reading Sthira Gupta. His reasons, as explained in his letter, were: 1, that Pura Gupta was an unsuitable name; 2, that the traces of the first akshara, shown in the collotype, could be read as *sthi*; 3, that Sthira was another name of Skanda, and that accordingly the reading Sthira had the advantage of eliminating a new king.

With regard to reason No. 2, Professor Bühler laid special stress on the fact, that the collotype showed a slight trace of a superscript *i*. This, indeed, is the only reason of any cogency; for the other two points are mere *a priori* considerations, which, at best, may confirm a case already proved, but cannot be evidence themselves.

Now that trace of a superscript *i* owes its existence solely to the character of the collotype. It has no existence on the original seal. There the space over the first akshara is as smooth and clear, as any one can wish. The unfortunate trace on the collotype is due to a slight

*indentation* on the seal, not to any *elevation*. The *cast*, of which Dr. Führer speaks, if well-made, should show this fact; and it is for this reason, that I do not believe that Prof. Bühler's opinion (if he still holds it) is based on the cast. However, casts are not altogether serviceable. I may, therefore, mention here that there exist three electrotype facsimiles, made at my request in the Survey of India Offices in Calcutta. One of them was presented by me to the British Museum in London, and the two others to the Museums in Berlin and Calcutta respectively. These are in every respect as good as the original, and any one who cares may examine them to verify the reading Pura Gupta. On these facsimiles, as well as on the original seal, this particular name is legible enough to the naked eye; but as the note, *ante*, p. 166, appeals to the "magnifying glass," I may add that I did make use of a magnifying glass, when I first read the name, and so (I have no doubt) did Dr. Fleet.

In the *Indian Antiquary* (*l. c.*) Dr. Fleet has explained the whole case so clearly, that I can do no better than quote his words:—

"In line 6, the name of the son of Kumâragupta I. is undoubtedly Puragupta, as read by Dr. Hoernle. The suggestion has been made to me that the text has Sthiragupta, as a variant of the name of Skandagupta, who is the known son of Kumâragupta I., mentioned in the other records that we have. It is unnecessary to point out other objections to this suggestion, because Sthiragupta is most certainly not the name that we have here. The mark below the consonant in the first syllable is distinctly the subscript *u*, formed as in the case of *mu* throughout; and the smooth surface of the plate here shews that nothing over and above this mark was engraved: the subscript *th* was most certainly not formed. The consonant itself is a little rubbed; but it is distinctly *p*. The idea of a superscript *i*, derived from the collotype, is due, partly, to the fact that the up-stroke of the *p* runs a trifle too high, and partly to an indentation in the surface of the seal, above the first part of the *p*, which, in the collotype, has appeared in such a way as to justify the supposition of a superscript *i*; the vowel, however, was not engraved. On the analogy of the names of the other early Guptas, my own idea, before seeing the original seal, was that the name here might be Suragupta, "protected by the gods." It is, however, indisputably Puragupta; which must mean "protected by a city, or by cities," and is not to be taken as an abbreviation of Purârigupta, Puramdaragupta, or any such appellation."

Sir A. Cunningham reads *Puru Gupta*. He does not explain his reasons. But though he says that the reading *Pura Gupta* is "quite inadmissible" (*l. c.*, p. 13, footnote), I note that he agrees with Dr. Fleet and myself in reading the first akshara as *pu*, which is the only point in dispute. His reading of the second akshara as *ru* is opposed to Professor Bühler, who agrees with Dr. Fleet and myself in reading *ra*; and indeed, this particular akshara is on the seal as plain as it well can be.

Moreover the name *Puru Gupta* is not a whit more suitable than the name *Pura Gupta*. But I must confess my inability to quite understand the force of this objection of unsuitability. *Pura Gupta* does "give sense"; it means (as Dr. Fleet points out) "protected by a city, or by cities." And why is it necessary that it should be "the name of a deity"? (For the objections, see *Observations*, p. 83, footnote 2.) That may seem to us, perhaps, to have been more symmetrical; but who is to judge those who gave or assumed the name? Any how, considerations of this kind, do not make evidence, to settle a dispute. I am free to confess, that I should have preferred reading *Sura Gupta* or *Sûra Gupta*, if the case had permitted it; and if we are to have recourse now to emendations of the text as it stands, and to admit an error of the engraver, I certainly prefer *Sura Gupta* to *Sthira Gupta*, for which latter the seal offers no support.

---